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2 SEPTEMBER 1982

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USSR: CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES ON U.S. POLICY

In recent months community analysts have seen evidence of debate in the second echelons of the Soviet regime about the implications of your Administration's foreign and defense policies. This feature outlines the positions taken by different sides in that debate about U.S. intentions.

Moscow of course attempts to present a picture of total unanimity in the top Soviet leadership about sensitive policy questions. Evidence of differing views can be found, however, in comments by influential second-level officials. Public statements and private remarks in the last several months have revealed the outline of two, and perhaps three, poles of opinion in this Soviet elite about the gravity of the threat presented by trends in U.S. policy under your Administration. This polarization of views could produce mounting pressures on the detente strategy pursued by the Brezhnev regime for more than a decade.

Advocates of an alarmist position appear to be arguing that a more forceful Soviet response to U.S. policy in the military realm is needed.

Proponents of the alarmist view describe the Administration's policies as presaging a strategic shift in the West away from

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detente and toward policies deliberately designed to seek confrontation with the USSR. This group, in which professional military spokesmen have been prominent, has portrayed the United States as literally preparing for war against the Soviet Union. The writings over the past year of Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, the chief of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff, have most prominently advocated this view.

Last February, Ogarkov likened the U.S. drive for world domination and its "active preparation for nuclear war" to the actions of Napoleon and Hitler. More recently a Major General and several hardline journalists have warned that U.S. military plans now include preparations for delivering a surprise "disarming" nuclear strike against the Soviet Union.

A group of optimists appear to be arguing that Moscow can afford to bide its time until Washington changes its course.

Arrayed against spokesmen of Ogarkov's stripe are Soviet officials who treat the shift in U.S. policy as more tentative, stressing the obstacles standing in the way of Administration efforts to shift U.S. foreign and defense policies rather than the danger they represent for the USSR. This optimistic posture serves a propaganda function and has been reflected in the established Soviet media line. But some prominent foreign policy officials at the second

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levels of the regime have presented more sophisticated versions of the argument that undercut alarmist interpretations of Administration aims. The most outspoken advocates of this position have been affiliated with Moscow's premier think-tank on the United States, the Academy of Sciences' Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada (IUSAC). Minimizing the threat posed by U.S. policies, they have insisted that U.S. economic problems, domestic social needs, internal political opposition, and resistance from U.S. allies constitute serious roadblocks to U.S. objectives.

A third group of activists appears to advocate a vigorous response to U.S. policy but to emphasize political and diplomatic measures rather than military.

A high-ranking Central Committee official, Vadim Zagladin, intimated at the end of July that there may be such a third pole of opinion in Moscow. He acknowledged that the issue of how to respond to U.S. policy had produced "extreme views" in the Soviet Union and the communist bloc and described two poles of opinion that roughly coincide with those just presented. Zagladin associated himself with a less sharply defined view that softpedals the threat of war, notes the constraints on U.S. policy, but apparently advocates an activist political strategy to ^{nourish the constraints} ~~blunt U.S. policy.~~

This third position appears to have been taken by two men who reportedly advise Brezhnev—the director of IUSAC, Georgiy Arbatov,

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and former Central Committee official, Aleksandr Bovin. In two widely publicized July newspaper articles Arbatov agreed there were serious obstacles to current U.S. military plans but emphasized the need for an activist strategy to encourage foreign opposition. Bovin has expressed the opinion that Moscow cannot expect to reach any "serious agreements" with your Administration but that Washington's "adverse influence on world affairs" can be restricted.

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and former Central Committee official, Aleksandr Bovin. In two widely publicized July newspaper articles Arbatov agreed there were serious obstacles to current U.S. military plans but emphasized the need for an activist strategy to ^{encourage} ~~nourish~~ foreign opposition. On the latter ~~count, he appeared to urge diplomatic measures to prevent your Admin-~~ *✓*
~~istration from being "dangerous" for the USSR. Bovin, whose pessimism~~ *✓*
~~about a "hard line" in Washington dates from the 1980 elections, has~~
expressed the opinion that Moscow cannot expect to reach any "serious agreements" with your Administration but that Washington's "adverse influence on world affairs" can be restricted.

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